

# 2025 Migratory Game Bird Status and Season Recommendations



# Atlantic Flyway: “Multi-stock” AHM duck harvest management

- 4 species: ~50% Atlantic Flyway harvest
- Represent wide-range of species life histories
- Expansive breeding and wintering distribution
- The 2024 estimated breeding population:
  - 0.47 million American green-winged teal
  - 0.87 million wood ducks
  - 0.73 million ring-necked ducks
  - 1.20 million goldeneyes





# What does this mean for duck seasons for 2025?

- Multi-Stock Optimal Policy: Liberal 60/6 duck season
- Some (unchanged from last year) species restrictions (eg: scaup, whistling ducks)
- Pintail bag limit increased from 1 to 3



# Canada Goose Populations: Atlantic Flyway



# Atlantic Flyway Canada Goose Management Zones

Canada Goose Zones based on preponderant fall-wintering population

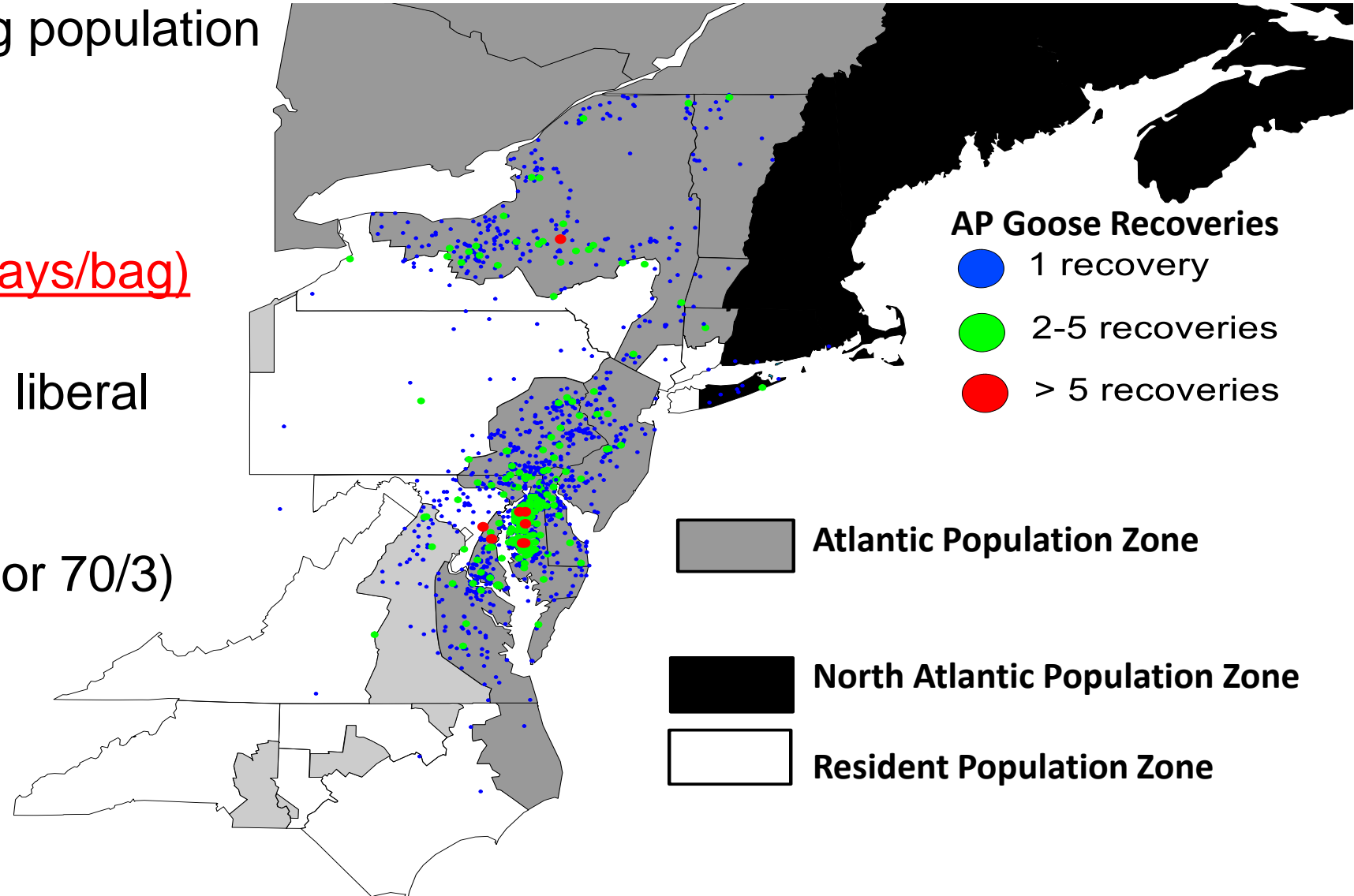
- Banding data
- Telemetry data

## Status and Regulations (days/bag)

**RP Zones:** Overabundant; liberal (80/5) seasons

**NAP Zones:** Stable; (60/2 or 70/3) seasons

**AP Zones:** more variable but poorer status





# Status of Atlantic Population (AP) Canada Geese



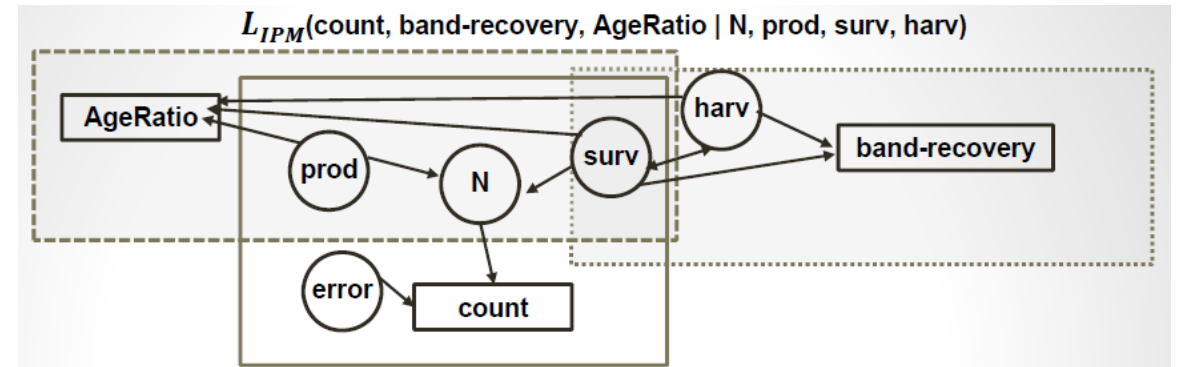
# AP Canada Goose Integrated Population Model Adopted

**IPM:** Links various survey data into joint-likelihood estimator rather than use data sets independently

- Parameter estimates inform each other
- Can deal “holes” in data
- Incorporates uncertainty
- IPMs can predict **future** population size

## Data sources in IPM

- Adult survival (banding data)
- Adult harvest rate (banding data)
- Spring conditions temp & snow northern Quebec (predicts age ratio)
- Age ratio of young:adults banding (serves as IPM ‘verification’ following weather prediction)**
- Breeding Survey Pairs (serves as IPM ‘verification’ following previous year prediction)**



# Metrics of AP Canada Goose Harvest Strategy


2025:  
133,500

Population Prediction (Pairs)	Harvest Package	Target Adult Harvest Rate	Packages for Chesapeake Region AP Areas Days/Bag	Packages for Mid-Atlantic and New England Region AP Areas Days/Bag
> 160,000	Liberal	7%	45/2	45/3
$\leq 160,00$ and $> 125,000$	Moderate	5%	30/2	30/3
$\leq 125,000$ and $\geq 60,000$	Restrictive	3%	30/1	30/1
< 60,000	Closed	0%	Closed	Closed



# What does this mean for 2024?

- **New Jersey**

- Regular Season **AP Areas** (North and South Zones): **30/1** ( **30/3 last year**)
- Regular Season **NAP Areas** (Coastal Zone): remains **60/2** concurrent with duck season
- **September and “Special Winter” seasons: no change**
- Chesapeake states (MD, DE, VA): 30/2
- AP Zones in Quebec and Ontario remain in reduced bag limit

# Atlantic Population Canada Goose Telemetry Project

- 400 GPS/GSM collars on female AP Canada geese 2022-24
  - 562 deployments (NJ = 19)
  - Extended through Winter 2026 (~100)
- Increase understanding of migration routes and timing, wintering areas (eg: adequacy of current zoning), nesting ecology
- Most units breeding grounds but some on wintering areas (MD, VA, NJ, PA?, DE?)
- Units should provide  $\geq 5$  years data



# Locations of Atlantic Population Canada Geese Jan 15 through Feb 15, 2023 & 2024

106 Locations from 32 individuals

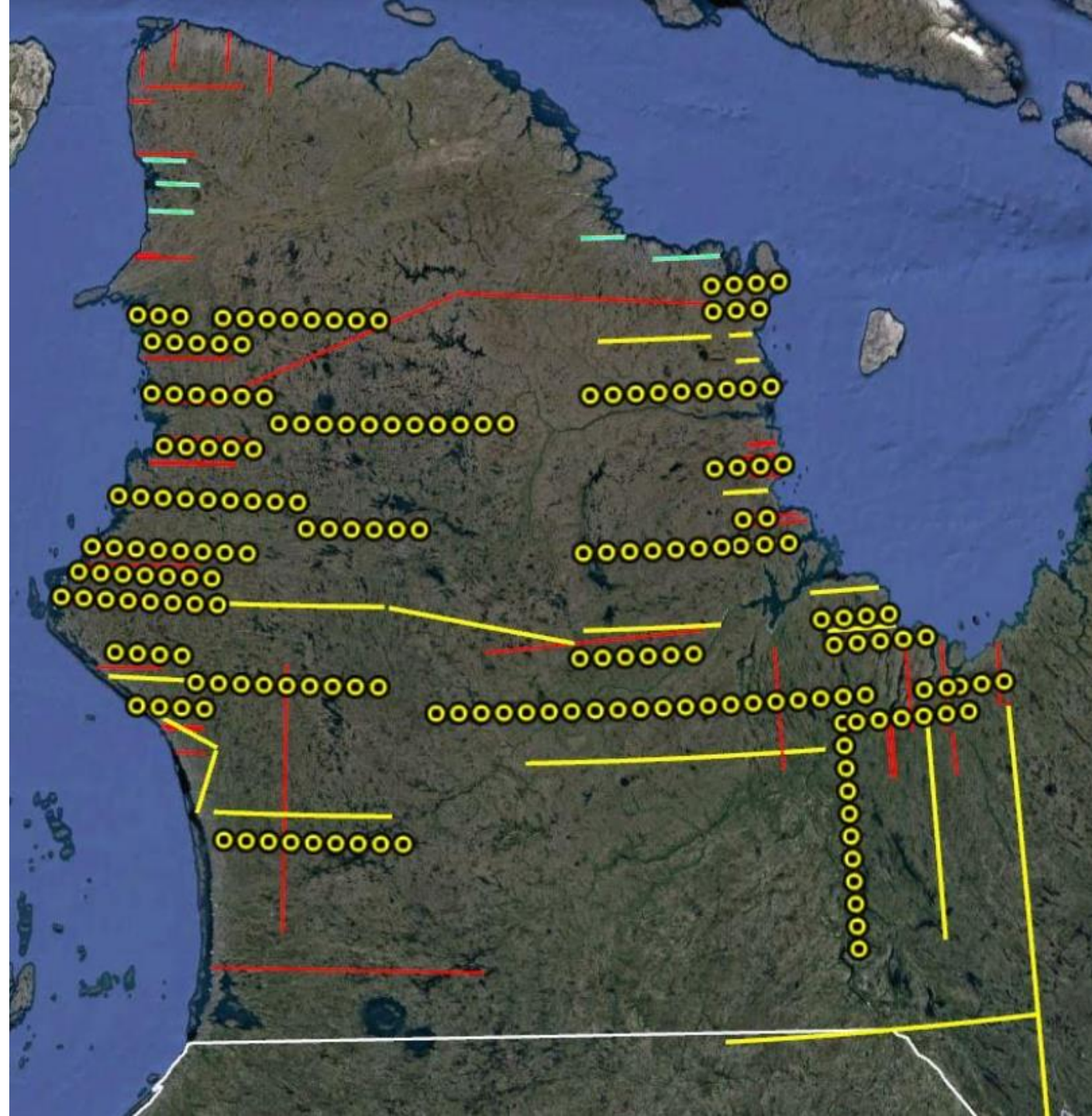
Locations within Special Winter  
Zone n=10 (9%)

## Legend

Special Winter  
Canada Goose Zones

North  
South

0 10 20 40 60 Miles



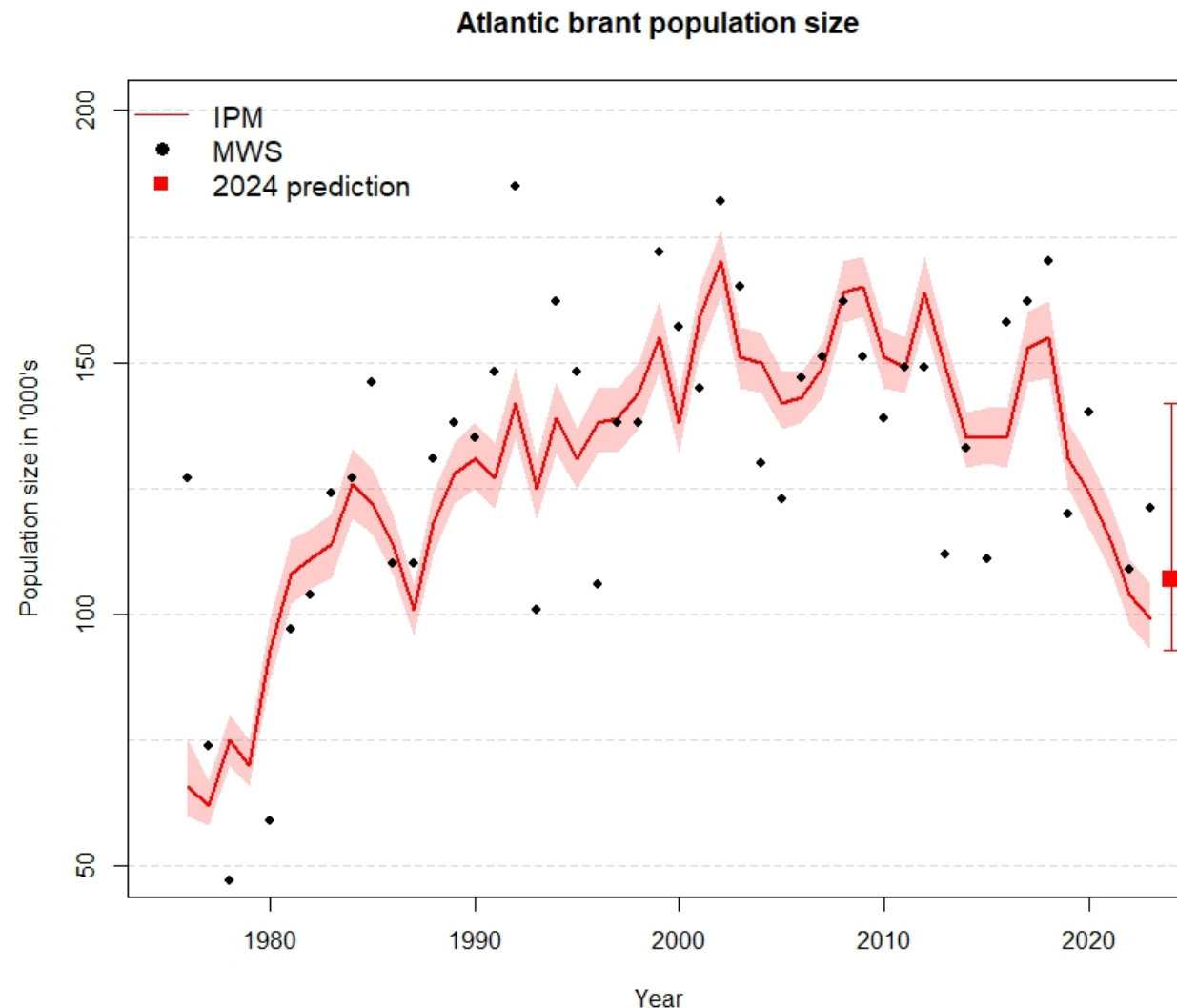


# Status Atlantic Brant



# Atlantic Brant Harvest Regulation 2025

- Atlantic Flyway uses IPM-based Atlantic brant harvest strategy
- IPM predicts Mid-Winter Survey
- 2025 IPM prediction: **111,000** brant
  - 115,000 is “cut point” for 30/1 season
  - 2024 MWS was 117,540
- Remain at 30 days, 1 bird bag

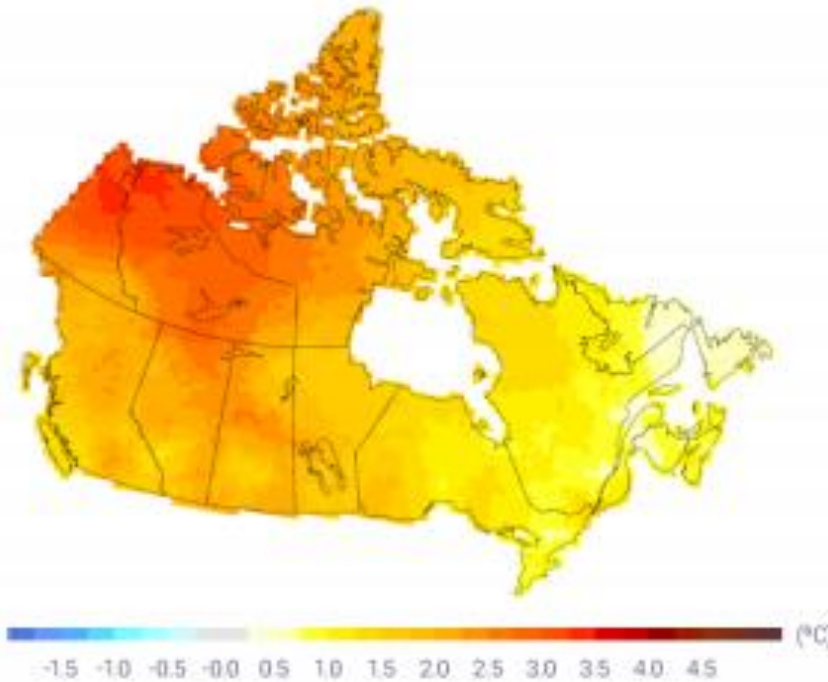


What about global warming, especially in Arctic?

Good for arctic breeding geese?



a) 1948–2016

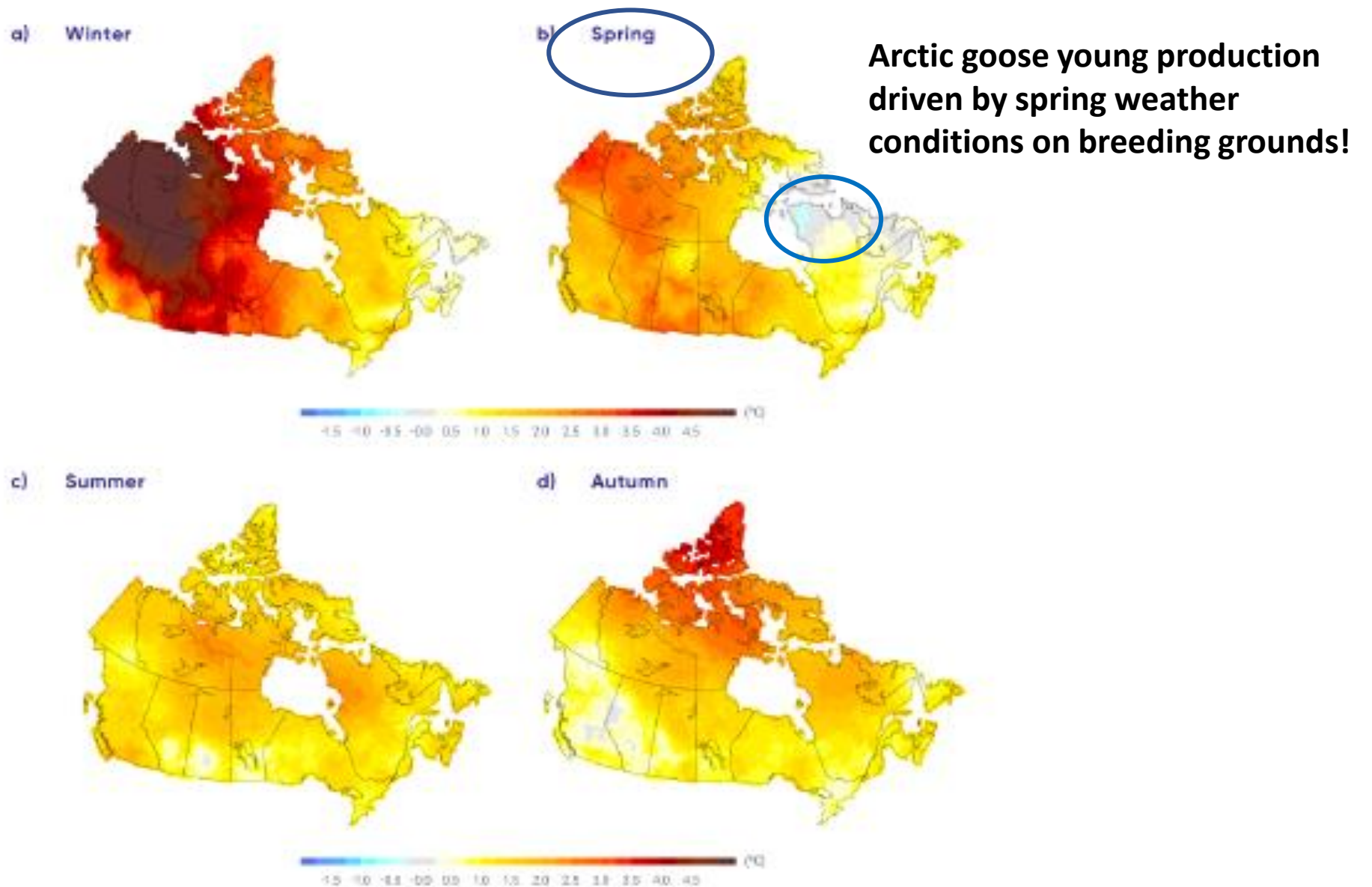


b) 1948–2016





# What about global warming, especially in Arctic?



# Annual Process: Migratory Bird Regulations

- States participate through 4 (*Atlantic*) Flyway Councils
  - Councils make recommendations to USFWS on hunting seasons
  - Atlantic Flyway Council: met September 2024
- US FWS annually promulgate **framework regulations** input from Flyway Councils
  - Bag limits, season length, earliest opening and latest closing dates
  - USFWS Regulations Committee: met October 2024
- States choose within federal frameworks of Proposed Rule published in Fed Register. State regulations can be more restrictive, but not more liberal, than federal frameworks

**PROVISION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:** published annually in **Federal Register** 50 CFR Part 20

- ***Preliminary Rule:*** Intent to have hunting seasons and any harvest strategy changes
- ***Proposed Rule:*** Season dates, bag limits, framework dates published

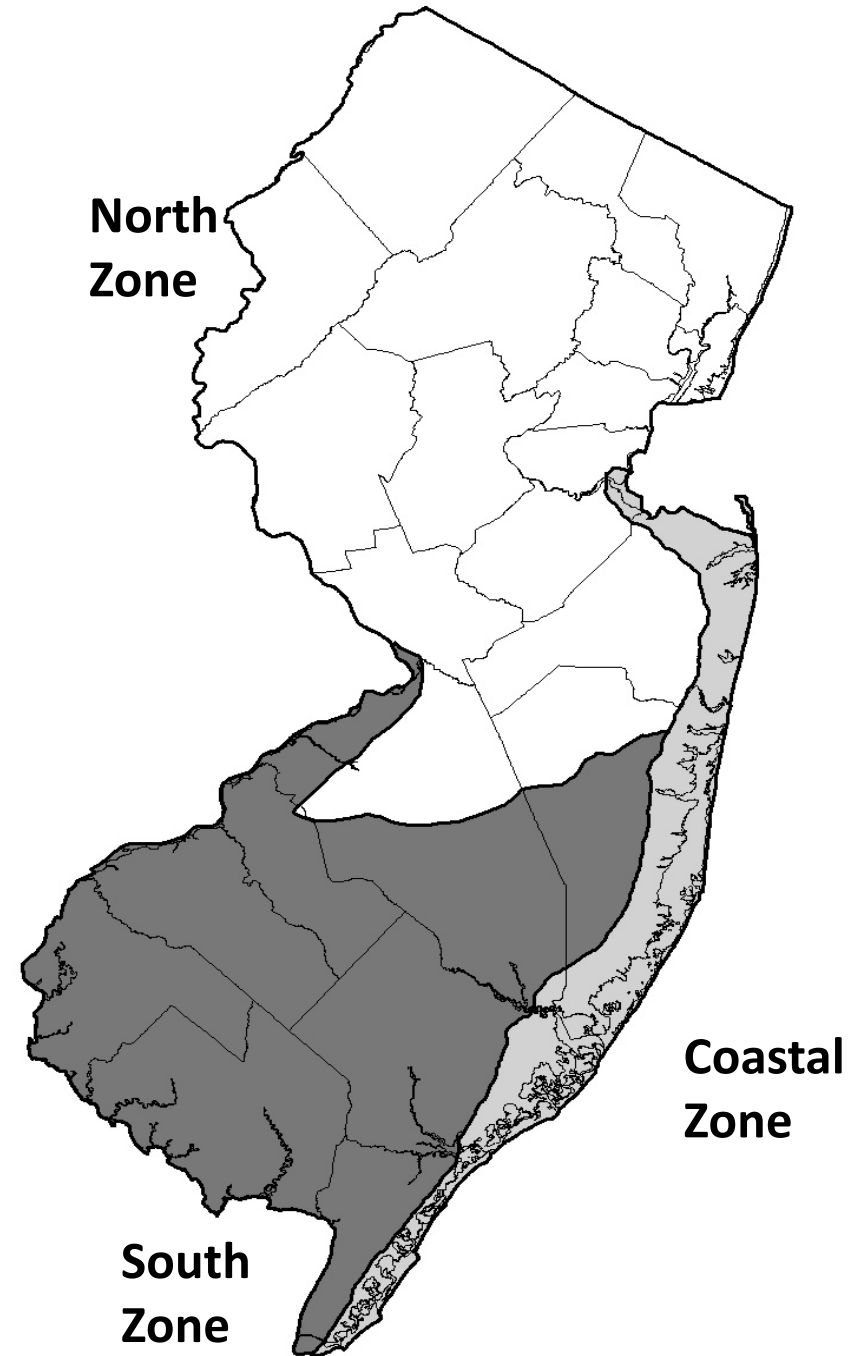
## **ROLE TODAY TO PRESENT:**

- **Proposed 2024-25 dates following consult with NJ Migratory Bird Committee (March 11) and**
- **Council will need to vote today on 2025-26 season dates/bag limits**

# New Jersey Waterfowl Zones

## Zone Partitioning:

- Habitat types
- Duck species
- Migration chronologies
- Allows for staggered season dates





# 2025-26 PRIMARY SEASONS

## NORTH ZONE

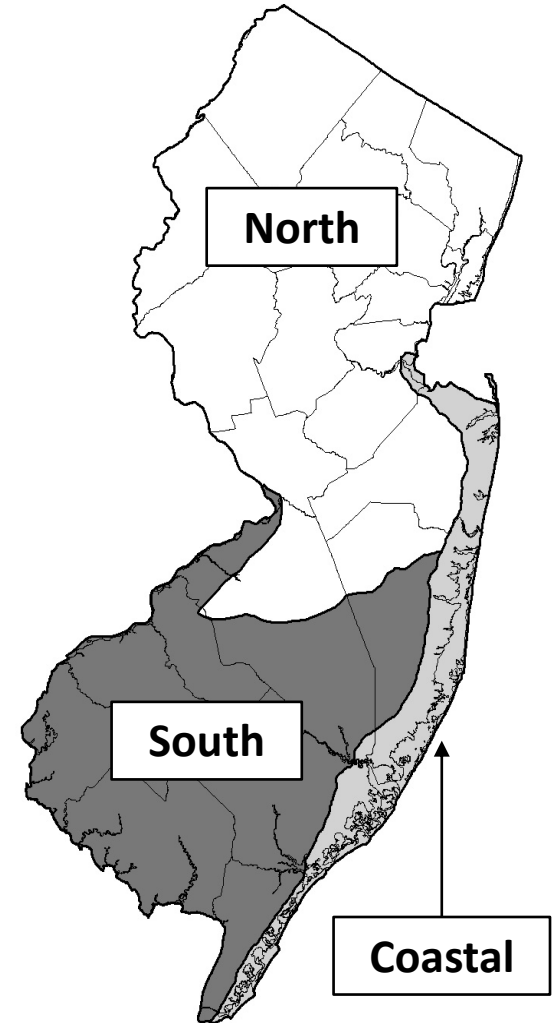
Ducks:	Oct. 18 – Oct. 25	Nov. 22 – Jan. 22
Brant:	Nov. 22 – Nov. 29	Dec. 13 – Jan. 8
Canada Goose:	Nov. 27 – Nov. 29	Dec. 23 – Jan. 22

## SOUTH ZONE

Ducks:	Oct. 18 – Oct. 25	Nov. 22 – Jan. 22
Brant:	Nov. 22 – Nov. 29	Dec. 13 – Jan. 8
Canada Goose:	Nov. 27 – Nov. 29	Dec. 23 – Jan. 22

## COASTAL ZONE

Ducks & C. Goose:	Nov. 22 – Jan. 30	
Brant:	Nov. 22 – Nov. 29	Dec. 24 – Jan. 19



# Youth and Veterans/Active Military Days

## Youth Waterfowl Days

North Zone: Oct. 11

South Zone: Oct. 11

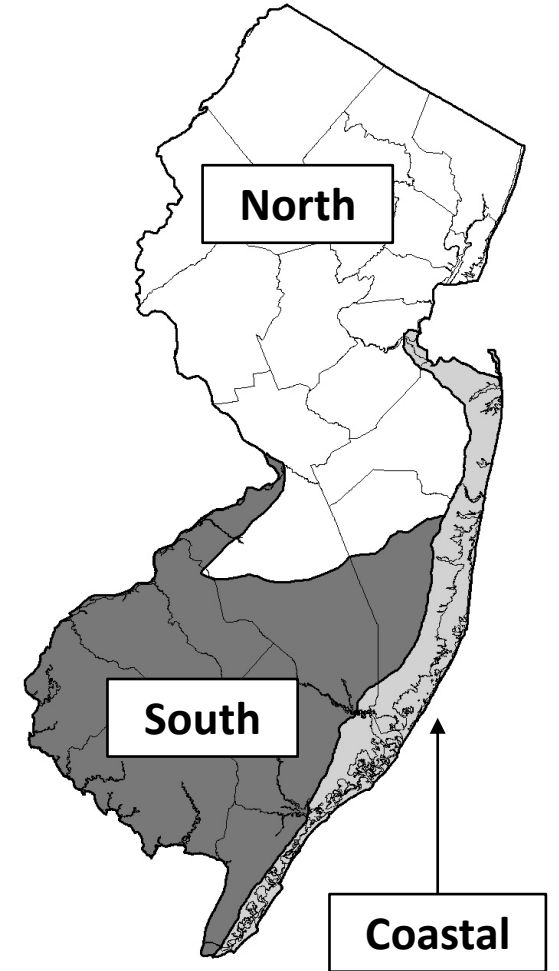
Coastal Zone: Nov. 15

## Veterans/Active Military Day

Statewide: Nov. 8

## “Joint” Youth and Veterans/Active Military Day

Statewide: Jan. 31



### Table 1. New Jersey Duck Seasons: All Zones, 2025-26

 = Ducks  = Youth Only Day  = Youth & Veterans/Active Military  = Veterans/Active Military Only Day  = Holidays

[illegible]

	December																															January																														
	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S																					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
North Zone																																																														
South Zone																																																														
Coastal Zone																																																														

	January							February						
	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
North Zone														
South Zone														
Coastal Zone														

### 70 different "standard" hunting days from 60-day season

### 11 Saturdays in North/South Zones and 10 in Coastal zone

## 12 different Saturdays for hunters willing to cross zones



## **Canada Goose**

### **September Season** (Statewide)

Sept. 1 - Sept. 30

*Bag limit: 15 Canada geese*

### **Special Winter Season** (Two Distinct Zones)

Jan. 23 – Feb. 14

*Bag limit: 5 singly or in aggregate to include cackling and white-fronted geese*

## **Light Geese**

### **Regular Season**

Statewide: Oct. 16 – Feb. 14

*Bag limit: 25 in aggregate to include snow geese and Ross's geese*

### **Conservation Order**

Statewide: Feb. 16 – Apr. 4

*Bag limit: None; includes snow geese and Ross's geese*

# Webless Species

## Woodcock

North Zone: Oct. 18 – Oct. 25  
Oct. 28 – Nov. 29

South Zone: Nov. 8 – Dec. 6  
Dec. 20 – Jan. 1

## Rails and Gallinule

Sept. 2 – Nov. 21

## Snipe

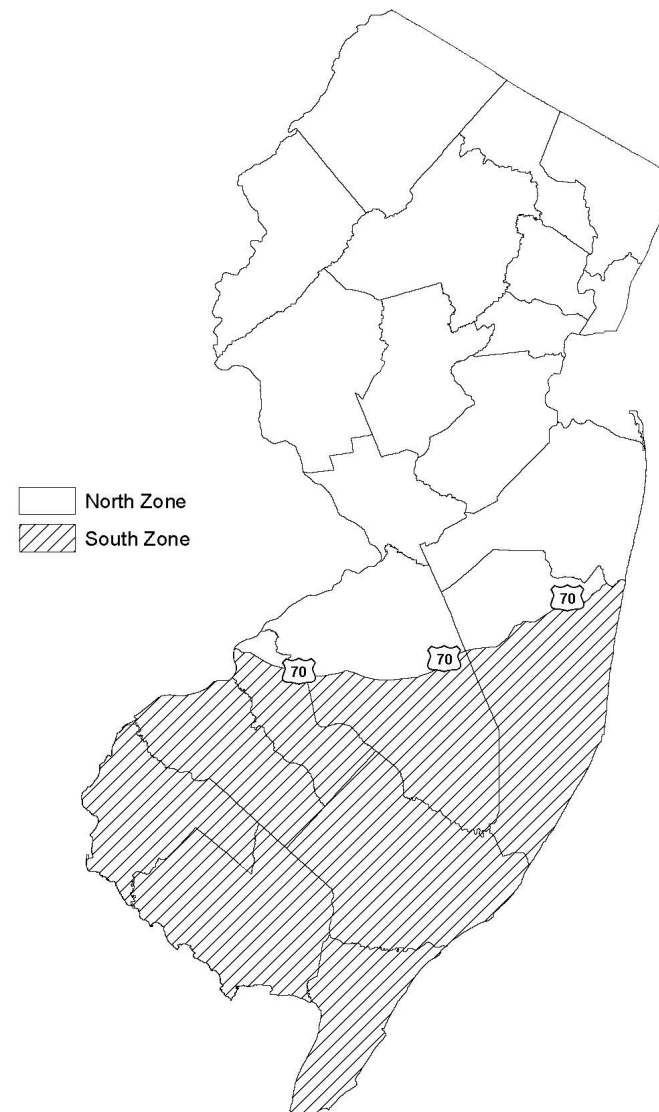
Sept. 7 – Jan. 9

Crows (Mon., Thur., Fri., & Sat.)

Aug. 12 – Dec. 7; Dec. 16 – Mar. 15

Mourning dove, king rail, sandhill crane: **Closed**

## Woodcock Zones



# NJ Fish & Wildlife's 2025 Telemetry Contributions





# Questions?

